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ABSTRACT

In the United States in recent years there has been extensive concern about school reform and keen interest in Japanese business management practices. This paper presents findings of a case study that examined the role and responsibilities of two middle school principals, one in Japan and one in the United States. The study is based on Krug's theoretical framework (1992), which supports a direct link between the principal's instructional leadership and school effectiveness as measured by student achievement. The paper discusses the principals' beliefs about the following five dimensions: (1) communicating the mission of the school; (2) monitoring the curriculum; (3) evaluating and supervising teachers; (4) promoting a supportive school climate; and (5) reviewing student progress. The two principals' roles and responsibilities revealed that their jobs were as different as fire and water. The American principal spent long hours evaluating teachers, monitoring the curriculum, reviewing student progress, and promoting a positive climate. He had little time to articulate the mission statement of the school. In contrast, the Japanese principal saw articulation of the school's mission as a top priority. Evaluating and hiring teachers, monitoring the curriculum, and assessing student progress were not his responsibilities. Although the two principals shared common beliefs about effective leadership, they essentially operated within two different job descriptions. The findings illustrate the importance of organizational structure and cultural expectations. The appendix contains copies of each job description. (Contains 29 references.) (LMI)

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A CASE STUDY OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN: METAPHORS OF FIRE AND WATER

A Paper Prepared for the

American Education Research Association

Annual Meeting

Chicago, Illinois

by

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With school reform at the top of the agenda of national and state policy makers, a renewed interest in identifying best practices in successful schools throughout the United States as well as overseas has emerged. Moreover, the recent release of the results of the Third International Mathematics Study has further prompted comparisons between schooling in the United States and schooling in other countries. As in past reform crusades, attention frequently turns to Japan. For example, last month the Illinois House of Representatives heard a proposal from the Large Unit District Association, which represents more than half of the students in the state, ask for additional state wide funding to lengthen the school year. Bills for mandated homework and school uniforms, two regular practices in Japan, are currently pending in the Illinois legislature. On a national level, the cover story of the most recent issue of the *American School Board Journal* (1997) "What Kids Should Learn," is an example of continued interest in creating a more rigorous content rich curriculum, an interest motivated, in part, by research of student achievement in Japan which credits the curriculum for producing higher achieving students. In analyzing data from the Second International Mathematics Study Westbury (1992, p. 23) writes, "The analysis I have offered here suggests that the difference between Japanese and U.S. achievement can be seen as a consequence of different curricula. Furthermore, we see that when U.S. teachers teach a curriculum which parallels that of Japan, U.S. achievement is similar to that of Japan. In other words, what we see in the SIMS data are major differences in curricula between the two countries' schools which result in predictable outcomes in terms of aggregate achievement and 'learning.'"

In addition to the length of the school year and curriculum, a large body of research cites several other reasons for the success of Japanese schools. These include the cultural context (Sato and McLaughlin, 1992), parenting (Hess and

Azuma, 1991), academic learning outside the regular school (Yang, 1994), the nature of the teacher workload and demands of non-teaching responsibilities American teachers have (Stevenson, 1993), textbooks (Mayer, Sims and Tajika, 1995; Gill, 1995)and teaching methods (Stigler and Stevenson, 1987). To be sure, some debate exists about the reasons for the superior performance of Japanese students, or if, in fact, it is superior at all (Goya, 1993; Bracey, 1996), but the weight of the evidence, as well as "conventional wisdom," indicates that Japanese students outperform American students.

Given the extensive concern for school reform as well as the keen interest of the business world in Japanese management practices, one would expect to see an abundance of comparative studies of school governance and administration. Despite the fact that in the United States, several studies in the 1980s focused on the role of the American principal in fostering effective schools (Blumberg and Greenfield, 1980; Shoemaker and Fraser, 1981; Leithwood and Montgomery, 1982; Coleman, 1983; Ubben and Hughes, 1987), neither Japanese nor American researchers have investigated the impact of the Japanese principal on school achievement. Three studies which compare the roles of principals in two countries will be discussed below, but none of these investigates the link between achievement and school governance. Krug (1992) and his colleagues' meta-analysis of the effective schools studies and the NAEP (1991) analysis of research on instructional leadership, revealed that leaders of effective school share some common behaviors. Krug's (1992) work , in fact, suggests a direct link between the principal's "instructional leadership" and school effectiveness as measured by student achievement. Using five of these "dimensions" as the framework for this paper, 1) communicating the mission of the school, 2) monitoring the curriculum, 3) evaluation and supervision of teachers, 4) promoting a supportive school

climate, and 5) reviewing student progress, this case study will provide a qualitative look at the role and responsibilities of two middle school principals, one in Japan and one in the United States, who are leaders in shaping effective schools. Although not a quantitative study, this work will inform educators on both sides of the Pacific about what good principals of good schools do. This study will share the principals' beliefs about the five dimensions listed above and describe their actions and behaviors which indicate to the extent each is pursued in practice. The research, then, will contribute to the literature summarized in the next section which identifies what similarities are shared and what differences are evident in the actions and beliefs of two junior high school principals.

Comparative Research

The seminal comparative study of seventy-one Japanese and sixty-six American principals (Willis and Bartell, 1992) examines the beliefs these "excellent" principals have about effective schooling, their reasons for becoming a principal, and their roles and responsibilities. Principals in both countries cite similar characteristics of effective schools. These include a positive school climate where students "feel good about attending and teachers feel good about teaching there." (p. 121). The school is child centered, orderly, and has clear and established goals. The administration supports the staff and garners wide involvement in decision making. Continuous improvement is evident. Moreover, "High expectations are set for all students. Students who show both academic and personal growth. There is an attempt to meet the needs of all students and prepare them to be successful in life. " (p. 121)

Given these shared characteristic of effective schools, one would expect that the qualities the principals regard as important are nearly identical. Willis and

Bartell (1992) confirm this supposition. The top four qualities perceived as important by U.S. principals are (in descending order): understanding of the instructional process, relations with teachers, relations with students and warmth and consideration. The top four qualities for their Japanese counterparts are: moral character, relations with teachers, warmth and consideration, relations with students. (p. 120)

When asked to rank their responsibilities, the similarities are equally striking. Of the twenty responsibilities listed, they share three of the top five: providing a supportive climate for teachers, articulating goals of the school to staff, and articulating the goals of the school to the public. Evaluating performance of teachers is first on the list of the American principals while recruiting/hiring outstanding teachers is first on the list of Japanese principals. (pp.117-118)

Only when examining the reasons for seeking a principalship does the study reflect noteworthy differences. On one hand, the American principals reported the top three reasons as: "felt I had leadership abilities/administrative skills, increase in salary, and professional advancement." (p. 111) On the other hand, the Japanese principals said: "realize my own educational ideals [to] promote educational excellence, no intention or reason to become a principal, and appointed/ordered/superior's recommendation/had to." (p. 112) It is clear that Japanese principals do not seek their position; rather, they are selected and appointed by superiors as part of a traditional and almost evolutionary process, one which "may discourage the change-oriented innovator from becoming a principal in Japan." (p. 113) Japanese principals have spent many years in the classroom. As they become regarded as excellent teachers through their many years of classroom experience, they are selected or appointed to administrative positions of either vice principal or a supervisor for the prefectural or city board of education. After serving

this "apprenticeship" they are then placed as a principal. Although in America, the term "principal" connotes administrative leadership, in Japan, the term for principal, "kocho sensei," connotes master teacher. (p. 108) .

Willis and Bartell (1992) note three other important differences between the groups of principals: age, experience, and the symbolic nature of the role. Japanese principals are older than their American colleagues, the average age being 59 compared to 49, and they have more experience as a teacher (19.75 years compared to 7.33) but less as a principal (7 years compared to 15.5 for American principals). A major difference is the symbolic nature of the principal. He (and all principals in the Japanese sample were men) is "an important symbolic figure in the school, an embodiment of the traditions and character of the school." (p. 118) Although the American principal is also the leader, he seldom gives the grandiose inspirational speeches at the opening and closing of schools or leads the singing of a traditional song at graduation. The importance of the Japanese principal as a ceremonial leader cannot be underestimated, for as the reader will see in the case study, this perspective has a profound influence on behaviors despite common definitions of effective schooling and shared role perceptions.

McIver (1992) provides a less scientific, but very intriguing comparison of Japanese and Canadian principals. She cites several examples of how the conditions of the school and the context of both the communities and the countries determine the principals role. Reading her description, the author was reminded about his first year as a superintendent of schools in a volatile school district and wondering if he ran the schools or the schools ran him. McIver makes a strong case that the schools run the principal: "The situation Japanese teachers work in does not allow room for an administrator with anything but the most traditional view on education . . . on the other hand, the Canadian administrator has ample opportunity

to encourage teachers to be creative in searching for, implementing, and fine tuning new methods of instruction."(p. 16) She concludes, "Many of the skills that the Canadian administrator works to hone would appear to go untried in Japan . . . it would appear that many decision facing the Canadian administrator never have to be considered by his or her Japanese counterpart. The opportunity to demonstrate leadership and affect a change to better the system seems to be limited." (pp. 118-119)

The third study (McLaughlin and Sato, 1992) looks at the cultural context to explain differences in achievement. In their research, they reflect on the difference in the governance in the schools. They report that "American and Japanese teachers have different relations with their colleagues and with administrators. American teachers rate the leadership of principals and the participation of site administrators in their professional worklife higher than do Japanese teachers, but Japanese teachers report much stronger and better defined collegial relations at the school level." (p. 360) Because the Monbusho, the Ministry of Education, selects and mandates the curriculum and prescribes the texts and lessons, one would assume that Japanese teachers have less autonomy and that the principal would be more active in monitoring the delivery of curriculum and supervising teaching methods than in America. Quite the opposite is true. Sato and McLaughlin report that Japanese teachers are less controlled than most American teachers. They note that in the United States, "many pressures work to restrict teachers' professional latitude. For one district concerns about legal liability and insurance requirements limit such activities as field trips, sports, and science experiments all of which Japanese teacher are free to initiate -- often at the last minute." (p.361) American administrators are also far more concerned with close supervision, controlling practices and insuring that adopted texts and curriculum guides are followed. In Japan, however, "most Japanese administrators frame their role in terms of maintaining good relations

with the district, buffering teachers from outside influence, and managing the school environment in ways that enable teachers to act in accord with their best professional judgment." (p. 361) In actuality, then, the governance of the schools by the Japanese national body is less imposing and restrictive to the life of a teacher than the governance by the local American school board.

These three studies, then, give some insight into the extent the five dimensions of leadership are practiced. Communicating or "articulating" the mission is important to both groups as is the fourth dimension, promoting a supportive climate. The American principals, whoever, appear to be far more concerned with teacher evaluation, monitoring the curriculum and reviewing student progress. The research indicates that despite commonly held beliefs about the principal's role in shaping effective schools, differences in administrative practices appear to exist. Though their curriculums and assessment of students are predetermined, Japanese principals have more freedom of action. Turning to the two principals in this case study, the reader will see how the dimensions of effective leadership are perceived and practiced.

Selection of the Schools

Having had the opportunity to visit schools in Japan and American and to interview principals, teachers, students, parents, school board members and professors in both countries, the author selected two schools which are highly regarded by both their publics and their peers. Although Northwest Junior High in Illinois and Yohika Junior High in the Prefecture of Niigata serve different populations of students--one in Niigata, a city of approximately 500,000, and one in suburban Chicago, the students are from families who lived comfortably though not luxuriously. The percentage of students at a "poverty" level is less than 5%. The

physical plants of both schools are well kept and have more amenities than the "typical" junior high schools in their respective state/prefecture. Each has facilities such as computer rooms, gymnasiums, school library/media centers, and science laboratories as well as ample field space for outdoor activities. As with most schools in Japan, Yohika also has a rooftop swimming pool for physical education classes, while Northwest, as is the case with most American middle schools, does not. The athletic and activity programs available to students are also above the norm, with each offering many varied opportunities for student participation.

Northwest and Yohika are also considered successful by both objective and subjective standards. Test scores for Northwest placed it in the top seven percent of all schools in Illinois. Examination scores for Yohika place "very high" among all schools in the prefecture. Moreover, both schools had numerous applicants for vacant teaching positions. Subjectively, both the Superintendent of the Regional Board of Education and the Superintendent of Niigata spoke highly of their respective schools. The teachers, parents with children in the schools, and professors familiar with the schools also rated them highly.

The schools were also selected for the reputation of the principals. As with the schools, the leaders were noted as being "highly effective," "dedicated," and "greatly respected" by the school boards, superintendents, teachers and parents. Though differing in age and experience, the American principal, Mr. Smith, and Japanese principal, Mr. Takashima, had many parallels. Both had been excellent teachers and both were clearly devoted to their schools, though both had been principals in other schools, a common practice in Japan where principals are transferred from school to school about every four years--but far less common in America. In initial interviews with the principals, both also expressed an interest in continued school improvement and effectiveness. Both were also candid with need

for various reforms, nationally and locally, and believed that their schools, though excellent, could improve. Finally, both were exceptionally proud of their schools and gladly allowed the author access to teachers, students, parents, and every room in their buildings.

Differences in the schools and the principals themselves did exist. Yohika Junior High in Niigata housed approximately 850 seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students, a common size for a Japanese Junior High School, while Northwest Junior High housed 350 students in grades six, seven, and eight. Yohika was a multi-story building, without handicapped accessibility while Northwest was a sprawling one story building completely accessible and with air conditioning, despite the fact that the American students did not attend school in the summer while their Japanese counterparts did. The programs and services at Northwest were more diverse than at Yohika. As with all schools in Japan, the teachers followed the curriculum established by Monbusho. Little differentiation of instruction or in programs were evident for students of superior ability or in need of special attention. In fact, for the entire 850 students, two teachers and two assistants were employed to teach students who had learning or behavior problems. At Northwest, with a population of 350 students, advanced classes in mathematics and language arts were available for bright students, and a part-time teacher was employed to assist other teachers in delivering challenging, engaging curriculum and instruction to talented students in social studies and science. Three full time staff members were solely devoted to delivering special education services to students with learning or behavior problems. The school also employed a full time social worker, part-time psychologist and part-time special education coordinator. Five teaching assistants, were employed to assist students with serious handicaps. Clearly, Northwest was committed to addressing the needs of disabled children, a

commitment, which as the reader will soon see, had a tremendous impact on the life of the principal. The teaching staff at both schools was a mix of veterans and newcomers, and both principals has a full time assistant or vice principal.

Turning to the principals, Mr. Smith, age forty-four, was younger and less experienced than most of his peers. A principal for eight years, he had served in three school districts. He had also been a classroom teacher, department chair, and college instructor. An energetic and ambitious man, his goal was to become a district level administrator in the very near future. Mr. Takashima was sixty-one years old, slightly older than most principals. He had spent twenty years as a teacher and, following the traditional career path of a Japanese principal, had worked in a city level administrative position for three years before becoming a principal. He had become a principal at fifty-five and spent four years at another junior high before being transferred to Yohika. As with his colleagues, he was pleased with his role and had no desire for leaving the principalship beyond normal retirement. Though the principals shared similar beliefs about instruction, their actual job descriptions were quite different (see appendix). Principal Smith had both a district level and a state level job description. These emphasized his role as the "instructional leader" with state law (*Illinois School Code*,1996) Section 5/10-21.40) mandating: "School boards shall specify in their formal job description for principals that his or her primary responsibility is in the improvement of instruction. A majority of the time spent by a principal shall be spent on curriculum and staff development through both formal and informal activities, establishing clear lines of communication regarding school goals, accomplishments, practices and policies with parents and teachers." Principal Takashima, however, had four prescribed duties: administration, management/policy, site maintenance, and human resources. Though both principals were cognizant of job descriptions,

the situations in and conditions of the school, the context of the community and environment, and their beliefs about instruction and leadership determine what they do day to day and week to week.

A Visit to the Schools

Setting foot into Yohika Junior High School, one cannot help but be struck by the collection of shoes at the door. Given the American fascination with footwear, one wonders how long the various Nike and Reebocks would last sitting in unlocked open cubby holes in any American junior high school. Exchanging shoes for slipper, the visitor steps into a building which exudes learning. As classes our being conducted, the building is nearly silent. No one--adults or children-- are in the library. A peek into a classroom shows somewhere between thirty and forty students wearing the uniform of the school--white shirts and dark pants or skirts--listening to a teacher, working diligently on assignments, or listening to a peer recite. From the science labs to the swimming pool, the teacher is clearly the center of learning. A sample experiment is being conducted by a science teacher; the math teacher calls on a student to solve a problem at the blackboard; the calligraphy teacher carefully guides her charges strokes as she walks around the room; the computer lab holds sixty-six students, each with a headset, listening to the teacher at the far front of the room conduct his lesson; and at the pool the teacher has students engaged in kick drills. A *gajin* visitor is not a common occurrence at Yohika, however, and furtive glances, a quick broad smile, muffled laugh, and flashed "peace" sign indicate that the students are typical of any early adolescent, at once curious and cautious, exuberant and reticent.

Few visitors are prepared, however, for the eruption of the passing period, the time between classes. As the bell rings, the dams break. Students flood the hallway, rock music streams from the intercom, and students spill into the hallway, walking pushing shoving, running, laughing, talking, and enjoying each other. Despite differences in academic achievement, despite impressions of subdued, studious schoolchildren, the American visitor is reminded that twelve to fifteen year olds share an incredible zest and energy. Surrounded by several students shaking hands, comparing height, practicing English, asking for business cards or just staring and giggling, the author was incredulous at how his reading and studies of Japanese schools had led him to conclude that Japanese teenagers would be so different from that of his son's eighth grade peers or the Northwest Junior High students, when in fact, except for the notable absence of "rage against the machine" tee shirts, the boys and girls of each culture were so strikingly similar. Watching the activity period and participating in a basketball game further confirmed the similarities. The activity period involved approximately 200 students in a large gym, unsupervised by adults. The gym was a blur of basketball, tag, soccer, and motion. Though the American administrator saw this as an accident--and lawsuit--waiting to happen, the Japanese educators believed this period was an important part of the school day as it gave children a chance to expend their pent up energy and practice tenets of "good behavior." In fact, during the 30 minute period, the visitors were astounded that there were no fights, teasing, or confrontations.

Retreating to the calm of the principal's office, one enters the educational equivalent of a Japanese garden. Well appointed with beautiful, polished, furniture, the office is a serene change from the the bustling activity periods. The visitors sip tea and a sweet as gifts are exchanged. The principal's broad desk is

nearly clear, and the school motto hangs behind him as it does in every classroom in the building:

Students care for others
Students with physical excellence
Students who learn

A computer, dictaphone or any other semblance of technology is conspicuously absent. During the two hour interview session, there are no interruptions for telephone calls or urgent problems. The principal shares, with great pride, pictures of the sports day, the opening ceremony, and graduation. The pictures do not focus on any individual; rather, they are long shots of large groups of students.

At Northwest, the visitor is struck by the polished floors and the school's mission statement prominently displayed on one side of the entrance while a banner proclaiming the schools as "Drug Free and Proud" hangs on the other wall. Walking through the halls, one hears a quiet hum of learning. The activities in classrooms are far different than in Japan. Only one or two rooms have desks arranged in rows, and in many classes small groups of students are working together on some project. In the science lab, students teams conduct an experiment; in the computer lab, about half the students are working on a writing assignment for a language arts teacher while the other half are engaged in science projects, enjoying some mathematics software, or engrossed in graphic design. The reading teacher sits on a student desk leading a lively discussion of character and theme. Two physical education classes are being conducted, one on health and one on basketball. The basketball instructor moves from group to group while some students engage in "two on two" games and others in drills. In each room, one or two students may

glance at the visitor, but quickly turn back to the business at end. Contrary to the school library at Yohika, the library media center is filled with students engaged in various activities. Some read quietly, others work together at computer stations, perhaps a dozen individuals are browsing the shelves, and in one corner four students' heads are nearly touching as they collaborate on a project they are preparing for social studies. The internet station is popular as students are searching the "Mad Scientists Network" for answers to interesting questions they had posed a few days earlier. The bell rings, and as in Japan, the hallways become white water rapids of sound and activity. Though music does not play as students move from one class to another, the same energy and conversations bubble around the visitor. Some students stop to say hello and others just wave.

Stepping into the principal's office, one senses he is in the core of the central nervous system. The institutional desk and conference table are covered with papers. A desktop computer along with a personal digital assistant (a Newton pad), dictaphone and calculator fill half the desk space. The fax machine and printer are on a nearby shelf. We are presented with a copy of the test scores, parent survey data, and the school yearbook which is filled with candid closeups of students. We are given coffee or pop from a small refrigerator. During the interview, we have no interruptions but sense a flurry of activity outside of the door. As we leave, the secretary rushes in with a list of four phone calls needing to be made immediately. "More fires to put out," remarks the principal, a comment which the next section shows is an apt metaphor for his work and sharp contrast to the work of Mr. Takashima.

What Principals Do All Day

Whereas Mr. Smith is usually the first one in his school around 6:30 a.m. and the last to leave in the late afternoon or following an evening event, Mr. Takashima is usually the last one to school and the first one to leave. These differences are professional choices. On one hand, Mr. Smith cherishes the quiet hour or so before school starts and the time after the students and faculty leave to "get his work done." On the other hand, Mr. Takashima realizes that his teachers "do not feel professional" if they get to school after he does or leave before he does. His work is completed while school is in session. As the principal he is the symbolic leader of the school. He is not concerned with what transpires in classrooms for the only measure of school excellence are the examinations for high school. Consequently, he seldom visits classrooms and never conducts a formal observation as his Western colleague. In fact, such a visit or a formal observation would be cause for alarm as a teacher would infer that he or she was not doing a good job. The teacher's union, which in Japan are far more concerned with ideology than with monetary gain, strives to avoid confrontation and attempts to mitigate and potential conflict between teacher and administrator. As a result, both teachers and the principal are far more comfortable, and probably far more productive, when Mr. Takashima is in his office. Mr. Takashima describes a great deal of his work as being "under the water," a figure of speech for "behind the scenes" and a far cry from "putting out fires." As a metaphorical SCUBA diver, he spends much of his time planning for the school budget, especially the number of staff he needs, discussing his need for future teachers with individuals at the Board of Education, and addressing any particular problem of the school.

A wayward student or teacher can bring great dishonor to a school and the principal, however, and demands immediate attention. Consequently, it is not

uncommon that much time and energy and worry is devoted to addressing a problem with an individual. "If necessary, I will work around the clock, twenty four hours, on the matter of bullying." When visitors come to the school, however, all is dropped. Visitors are treated royally, and Mr. Takashima spends time with them. His daily life, though busy, affords time for reflection, planning, and thinking.

Across the Pacific, Mr. Smith finds little, if any, time during the day to complete paper work or concentrate on the district level curriculum committee he chairs, much less to think and reflect about the school. After greeting the students, he tries to find time to visit classrooms informally and is in the halls for most passing periods. At least three hours each week are devoted to conducting teacher observations and preparing written forms for each. He also tries to spend time in the lunchroom to keep order, handles the serious discipline problems (the vice principal handles the more mundane ones) and returns <u>at least</u> twenty telephone calls a day. His day is frequently packed with meetings. Before school it may be with a teacher or special education conference; during the day he will meet with grade level teams or individuals; after school is reserved for curriculum and faculty meetings, and at least two evenings a week, he finds himself involved in a parent meetings, school activities, or district level responsibilities. Moreover, throughout a week, he probably devotes at least ten hours to special education concerns. A multi-disciplinary conference may take an hour or two, though some have lasted six, and a phone conversation with a parent and appropriate follow up can easily demand another precious hour. "'Hectic' doesn't begin to describe many of my days," claims Principal Smith. "All I did yesterday was put out fires. I am very tired." Though firemen in the Chicago area generally work two days on and have two days off, Mr. Smith's job generally requires him to work at least five and often six days with barely time for lunch. Despite this schedule, he has earned a reputation as the

person who transformed a "cold" junior high with "entrenched" teachers to a child centered middle school known for innovative social and academic programs.

Our effective leaders, then, have quite different responsibilities and a far different structure to their day. The jobs, in fact, do not even look similar. Turning to the dimensions of instructional leadership, one may wonder if the reader will find even more differences or begin to see some commonalities.

The Five Dimensions of Instructional Leadership

Communicating the Mission

Principal Takashima is the personification of the school's mission statement and a reflection of the cultural importance of schooling. Responsibility and hard work are the theme of most of his ceremonial speeches and even his informal conversations with students, parents, and staff. He makes it clear that the school's motto is also their mission: to foster learning, physical excellence, and students who care for others. "Caring for others" was his idea to address a pervasive problem in Japanese schools, bullying. By incorporating "caring for others" as part of the mission statement, he has made it the philosophy of the school, a model to emulate. He has made it clear that bullying will bring great dishonor to the school and that "caring for others" is expected of students who wish to succeed. Contrary to most American principals, Mr. Takashima firmly believes that the mission statement will inspire good behavior. Whereas American visitors often wonder why social workers or counselors are not placed in Japanese schools or why special programs are not instituted to address this system wide problem, this leader, and most of the Japanese administrators from the school level through the Monbusho, believe that a philosophy statement will have more impact.

In addition to posting the mission in all classrooms and using it as a theme for his speeches, Principal Takashima also extols, and models, highly moral behavior, resolution of conflict through dialogue, responsibility, hard work and a well rounded education. One senses that his reputation for excellence is directly related to his ability to articulate the desired characteristics of Japanese students and his reputation for being "a man of character." He spends a good deal of time working on speeches and meeting with people. A substantial portion of each week is devoted to presenting the mission of school and society to students, staff, parents and other educators.

Principal Smith thinks about the mission of the school nearly every day, but seldom has time to devote to sharing it with others. The presence of the mission statement at the entry way certainly bespeaks its importance. The "Drug Free and Proud" banner on the facing wall, though not the school's mission, also expresses a philosophy of the school--and an aspiration of both the local community and the country. Similar to "caring for others" this motto is one of many weapons for attacking a serious problem, the use of drugs and alcohol. Unlike the Japanese, however, the American government, state government, and local school districts have spent hundreds of millions of dollars on programs, personnel, and services to fight drug use. In fact, Principal Smith devotes several hours a month related to matters involved in the "drug education" programs. For him, a philosophy statement, though important, will not curb the problem of growing drug use.

Principal Smith refers to the mission statement in occasional presentations or memos to parents, but scarcely mentions it in faculty meetings and never discusses it with students except in his welcoming message. Faculty meetings are devoted to discussing administrative business and the mechanics of running the school, scheduling issues, and the like. Student messages are also topic driven, not

philosophy driven. Whereas communicating the mission is of great importance to Principal Takashima and takes up a measurable potion of his time, Principal Smith acknowledges its importance but devotes almost none of his time to communicating it.

Monitoring the Curriculum

Contrary to "communicating the mission," this dimension of instructional leadership poses a substantial time commitment for Principal Smith. Nearly every day he walks around the building visiting classes to be sure the curriculum is being taught. When a new program is adopted by the board of education, his vigilance increases, and teachers who may be reluctant to abandon an old curriculum are frequently reminded, in person and in writing, that they must teach the new curriculum. In addition to visiting classes, he reviews teacher lesson plans, he conducts and analyzes student, teacher and parent surveys related to the curriculum, and he studies it himself. He indicates that an important part of his job is that teachers follow and cover the Board approved curriculum: "Unless I am on top of the social studies teachers, they will never get through all the material." He also devotes a great deal of time and energy researching and thinking about ways to improve the curriculum. A chair of a district committee, he takes on this extra responsibility with enthusiasm and energy despite the fact it adds several hours to his already overloaded weekly schedule. Monitoring curriculum, then, is an important element of instructional leadership to our American principal.

Mr. Takashima devotes almost no time to curriculum issues. The Japanese curriculum-from the philosophy to the standards to the texts--are mandated by the Monbusho. Though teachers have flexibility in methods they will use to teach the curriculum and in presentation of the lessons, they must follow the model. Because

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the students' academic future--as well as the school's and the teacher's continued success--depends on students' performance on the ninth grade examination, which is solely based on the curriculum, no one considers doing otherwise. If asked, Principal Takashima in his role of "kocho sensei" will give advice on a teaching method or technique or help a teacher identify a field trip or other outside resource to supplement a particular lesson. He does not, however, present these to the staff nor spend any time to see if a teacher is teaching the curriculum. In his building, as in most Japanese schools, teachers work with each other to resolve any problems related to delivery of the curriculum. "All teachers in our school work very hard at teaching their subjects. In their meetings and in their workroom they talk about how they make each lesson successful for each student." The collegial relations among staff which McLaughlin and Sato (1992) describe, then, are an important part of Yohika's operations and success.

Evaluating Staff

As with "monitoring curriculum" this third dimension of instructional leadership represents a major time commitment for Principal Smith but is barely a consideration of Principal Takashima's. As noted earlier, Principal Smith devotes much time each week to teacher evaluation. In addition to his daily visits to classrooms where he collects data he will use in preparing the final evaluation write up, he conducts "formal" observations for approximately twenty teachers a year. These observations involve sitting in a teacher's class for forty to ninety minutes three consecutive days. Veteran teachers are formally observed once or twice each year while first or second year teachers are observed three or four times a year. Prior to this formal observation, the principal conducts a pre-conference meeting, and after it he holds a post observation conference where he shares his written notes.

These meetings add another hour. At the end of the year, he completes a lengthy narrative final evaluation, a process which takes about five or six hours for each teacher, and then holds a concluding conference. Clearly, evaluating teachers is important to Mr. Smith. In fact, he believes that it is the most important aspect of his job as it will ensure that all students have a high quality education may potentially protect the system from external pressures and internal stress: "Just a few bad teachers can ruin an entire school. When I started here, I was fielding all kinds of calls and complaints about three staff members. I had all kinds of problems because some teachers supported the bad apples while others wanted them out."

If Principal's Smith's evaluations do indicate that a teacher is not performing well, he devotes a tremendous amount of time to helping the teacher improve. Meetings are held, further observations are conducted, and resources are identified for the teacher. In the event a teacher needs to be dismissed for poor teaching or a particular transgression, all other responsibilities are placed on the back burner. No longer is the matter a "fire to be put out," it is a forest fire or a "four alarm" conflagration burning at the edge of out of control. The situation will require the time and manpower of an entire team including other administrators, lawyers, and even parents over an extended period of time--usually several months. Having successfully dismissed a tenured teacher after rounds and rounds of negotiations, an arbitration hearing, and at a cost of approximately $80,000, Principal Smith said, "I was drained. I was completely drained."

As noted earlier, Principal Takashima does not visit classrooms. He also does not conduct formal observations. His evaluations are simple reports to the Board of Education. Says Principal Takashima, "I must give all teachers a ranking like your A, B, or C. I do this through the relationships I have. Most teachers are As. I do not give many Cs because it would like I were not doing my job. It would also cause

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problems for the school and reflect badly on our stature." In addition to hurting the school's reputation, then, too many low evaluations would also result in 'problems for the school' such as conversations with the teacher's union and confrontation with the teacher--unpleasantries which are to be avoided. Teacher evaluation, then, consumes little of Principal Takashima's time. Whereas teacher evaluation is literally a daily concern of Principal Smith, Principal Takashima notes, "My teachers are all good; I do not spend time thinking about this."

Mr. Takashima reported that he had not had to work with any poor teachers much less attempt to dismiss one. When asked what he would do, he said, "I would worry about it for it would not be good for our school. I would work 'under the water' to help the teacher. I would find other teachers in the building to help him." In the event these efforts were not successful, Principal Takashima conjectured, "I probably would then try to talk to him about finding another career where he could contribute in a worthwhile way."

As with monitoring the curriculum, teacher "quality control"at Yohika and in most Japanese schools is handled by the teachers. There is much "peer pressure" to succeed as the quality of the school is judged by the success of the students on the examination. Beginning teachers listen to, and learn from, the master teachers in the building. The teaching load and administrative work requirements of the Japanese middle school teacher are less than the American teacher so they have time to visit classes and watch colleagues teach, an accepted and apparently successful practice. Teachers willingly open their doors for their peers and are eager students of the style and methods of others. The faculty workroom at Yohika is far different from the "Teacher's Lounge" at Northwest. The workroom is stocked with crowded desks, materials, resources, and computers whereas the American lounge is a place to relax. *Sports Illustrated* and *Skiing* share shelf space with

professional publications, and a couch and two overstuffed chairs and round tables indicate that this area if for teachers to relax or unwind. The discussions about methods, students, and curriculum generally happen in regularly scheduled team meetings held two or three times per week in a professional conference room. The free flowing dialogue about teaching the curriculum and educating the children is not as prevalent in the Northwest teacher's lounge.

Related to evaluating staff, is evaluating potential staff. The involvement of the principals in the hiring process differ as markedly as their roles in teacher evaluation. On one hand, Mr. Smith is directly involved. For every vacancy, he reads at least thirty resumes and will commonly interview four or five candidates. He telephones references and seeks advice of the superintendent and input from the veteran teachers. The time spent--at least thirty hours for each vacancy--is "well worth the effort" according to Principal Smith. He explains, "Hiring a new teacher is one of the most important things I do. When a teacher retires, it is an opportunity for me to find someone who can teach different subjects and who brings energy and enthusiasm to the classroom. I want to find people that really care about kids, that will do more than just teach one subject, and who will excel. I want the best."

Though having the top teachers in his school is equally as important to Mr. Takashima, he does not have formal control of who works in his building, for the board of education places all new teachers. Seldom will he and a new teacher meet before school begins. New teachers do not know why they end up in a particular building. All they know is that they were given their assignments based upon forms they completed, subjects they teach, and where they live. Once again, however, Mr. Takashima works "under the water" to obtain the best teachers. When a vacancy exists, he requests very specific characteristics and qualifications.

He uses his established relationships in the board office to identify and attempt to influence the placement of new teachers. Because teachers are eligible for transfers after seven years of teaching, vacancies are common and veteran principals are skilled and practiced at using their contacts to obtain highly regarded teachers or teacher candidates.

Fostering a Positive Climate

Both principals believe--and their actions reflect--that to be effective a principal must foster a supportive school climate. Both stated that school should be a central part of a child's life and should be a place where students can learn and can participate in a variety of athletics and activities. They want students to feel safe at school and work hard to promote school spirit among the student body. Both principals expect their teachers to do much more than teach subjects. They want them to counsel students, to visit homes when necessary (a practice far more prevalent in Japan), to coach sports and to sponsor activities.

Principal Takashima's actions reflect his beliefs in many ways. In addition to playing music during passing periods, he thoroughly plans and prepares for sports days and other large school wide events. He supports the unstructured activity period as a way for students to practice lessons they learn about self-discipline and self-control: "We teach our students how to conduct themselves in situations where they must make decisions for themselves." He is proud of the time his teachers devote to helping students with academic or social problems. Although he does not credit himself, one cannot help infer that the staff realizes his commitment to the well being and educational, social, and moral development of teenagers. As a teacher, he would visit families in their homes and work with students long after school ended. His staff admires his reputation and seeks to model his teaching skills and behaviors.

Mr. Smith also "walks the talk" of his beliefs as he actively promotes a positive climate and monitors it throughout the school year. In addition to being a cheerful, upbeat presence throughout the school, he ensures that the school day begin and end with announcements over the intercom which engage, inform and even entertain students. He frequently praises[1] students and staff for specific accomplishments and even sends the superintendent a monthly memo of achievements for the school board to recognize at their meetings. Likewise, he writes students or staff members four or five letters a week commending them for a special project or assignment they have completed or innovation they have successfully implemented. During his three years at Northwest, Mr. Smith has added numerous student activities, opened the school on Friday nights for social events, and created a welcoming, supportive spirit. In addition, he has collected survey data from parents and students to share with teachers. Armed with this information, he has been able to motivate his teachers to make the school atmosphere more child centered. Also, his high standards of behavior and expectations for student conduct have made a positive mark. Discipline problems seldom arise and the actions of the school almost always are fully supported and reinforced by parents. Mr. Smith is justifiably proud that the many hours he has given and continues to devote to building a positive and caring middle school climate have been successful.

Reviewing Student Progress

As one who has read this far might suspect, Principal Takashima does not spend many of his hours at work reviewing student progress. He knows that his school, his staff, and his own effectiveness are judged by his students' ninth grade examination scores. Confident that teachers are delivering the curriculum to all

students, he will provide advice, if asked, about how to reach a particular child. In the extremely rare case of a student having great difficulty learning or behaving badly, he will intercede with the family. As a rule, however, he does not attend to student progress. Students with serious special education needs are not housed in his building, and the exceptionally gifted and talented students are not given any additional instruction. In fact, Mr. Takashima indicated that many of these students attend private schools.

At Northwest, Mr. Smith, who calls himself "a card carrying data wonk," allocates substantial time to analyzing test score data for his school as well as keeping track of the progress of particular individual students. Each year, students take a standardized test in the fall and a statewide assessment in the spring. Mr. Smith pours over the results looking for trends, evidence of gender differences, and other indicators of success or causes for concern. Reviewing data from other group tests such as the high school foreign language examinations and the Hannah Orleans Algebra Prognosis test is also important to him. Mr. Smith readily shares the data with grade level teams, departments, parents, school improvement teams and his faculty as a whole and seeks their interpretations as well. He uses the test score information to make decisions regarding class assignments, school improvement plans, and budgeting. For example, the most recent set of test scores indicated that girls were scoring significantly higher than boys in reading and language arts. As a result, he has asked the language arts teams to examine their practices and see what they could to improve the boys scores next year. If a recommendation for additional literature books geared to the interest of boys is forthcoming, Mr. Smith will be sure that funds are available.

On an individual student level, he is directly involved with special education students though more my mandate than by choice. Any student who has

an Individualized Education Plan, the IEP, (approximately fourteen percent of the student body) must have an annual review of the plan or a multidisciplinary conference (also known as a staffing) for any major revision to the IEP. The principal must attend all of these meetings. In addition, students who are referred to the special education team by parents and students and who may qualify for special education services generally require three to four meetings, all of which the principal attends. These meetings are used to determine appropriate interventions before referrals, to review existing data before a case study, to examine the results of a case study, and to determine placement. "These meetings are killing me," sighs the principal. "Last week alone, I spent three whole days devoted to four special education students. One meeting lasted more than six hours!" He continued, "These meetings never last less than forty minutes and usually more than an hour. I must spend at least 30% of my time on less than 10% of the students. We need to think of a better way." With the time demands of special education, his penchant for reviewing student test data, and the importance he places on evaluating teachers, one is not surprised that Mr. Smith has little time to devote to reflection and thinking about articulating the school mission much less attending to more routine tasks. Getting to work at 6:30 a.m. and leaving twelve to fourteen hours later may be the only solution for being able to accomplish all he needs to do to be an effective principal.

Conclusions

Though Mr. Smith and Mr. Takashima are principals in name, their actual roles and responsibilities reveal that their jobs are as different as fire and water. On one hand, Mr. Smith spends long hours evaluating teachers (both existing teachers and potential ones), monitoring the curriculum, reviewing student progress and

promoting a positive climate. He has little time for articulating the mission statement despite the fact he acknowledges its importance. On the other hand, articulating the mission statement is a top priority of principal Takashima. Fostering a positive climate conducive to learning and development is also of great importance, but the other dimensions of effective leadership--as defined in Western "effective schools" research--do not concern him. Evaluating teachers and hiring teachers are activities which happen "under the water," even when problems exist. Monitoring the curriculum and reviewing student progress are simply not considerations as these are primarily responsibilities of the teachers and the vice principal.

The metaphors they use are apt. Mr. Smith is a firefighter. Listening to him speak of his non stop days, watching him as he moves around the school, and feeling his direct involvement in the daily operations, one can almost smell the smoke in his hair and clothes and see the singed eyebrows and smudged skin of a smoke jumper. Though he actively pursues all the dimensions of effective leadership which time allows, one cannot help but wonder if in the United States, principals run the job or the job runs the principal. Though a top principal, one cannot help but wonder how long he can keep his pace without "burning out," a serious problem in American school administration.

Working "under the water," one imagines Mr. Takashima moving slowly and quietly as he attempts to influence outcomes. As with any SCUBA diver, however, his influence must be minimal as his role is small in relationship to his environment and he must always be tethered to his boat, the "SS Monbusho." He will not be the one to change the currents or still stormy seas. He may change the course of a school or a "fish" within the sea, but his presence alone may be as responsible for any resulting change as his actions are. Though this position may

appeal to beleaguered instructional leaders in America; recently, prefectural boards have found reluctance and even occasional resistance when Japanese candidates are tapped for a principalship. They do not want to leave their classrooms or take responsibility for social problems finding their way into Japanese schools. They also believe they more directy influence students' lives in the classroom.

In closing, this case study contributes to existing research of school governance in both countries. These two principals may share common beliefs about effective leadership, but essentially they have two different jobs. This study suggests that the title of "Principal" is not a term which readily translates. At Northwest, our principal, the fire fighter, was an administrator and supervisor. At Yohika, our principal, the diver, was, as the research of Willis and Bartell indicated, a symbol, a figure, an embodiment of the school. He was hocho sensei, a master teacher. Administration of the school was the work of teachers and the vice principal far more than of the principal himself.

Although the findings cannot be generalized, this research extends a reader's understanding how the context of the schools and the culture of a society dictate the job of the principal. It also provides accounts which support data from existing research and reflects difficulties in cross cultural studies. This paper further suggests that additional comparative research into the impact of school governance on student achievement may <u>not</u> be worth pursuing independent of the structural organization of the school itself. Facing the current demands of special education, teacher evaluation, and accountability within the structure of the existing school, the American principal may well be doing all he possibly can. These demands and this structure do not afford him the opportunity to reflect, to plan and to think. Likewise, however, the structure and cultural expectations for the Japanese principal do not afford him the chance to be a "dynamic instructional leader." Evaluating

teachers and monitoring the curriculum would be a great intrusion on the system and affront to the teachers. These activities, though, may be essential to any successful reform in Japanese schools just as a key to improvement in American schools may involve freeing the principal and teachers for time to think, to reflect, to plan how they can instill their mission in every member of the school community.

As a final word, the author hopes that the teachers, students, and parents at Northwest and at Yohika understand the commitment to children and the passion for excellence which both men hold as well as the conditions which restrict their ability to do all they would like to do for boys and girls. These restrictions make it very easy for passivity and mediocrity to exist at the helm. These schools are truly fortunate to have effective leaders dedicated to continuous improvement, be they firefighters or divers, administrators or master teachers, American principals or Japanese principals.

Notes

[1] A word about praise deserves mention. While Mr. Smith and his teachers teachers use ample praise to recognize accomplishments of students and to promote a positive school climate where students "feel good about school and feel good about themselves," Mr. Takashima and his teachers were surprised to hear about this idea. In a meeting with the principal and teachers, the interviewer was relating how praise was used in American schools and asked--through an interpreter--about its impact at Yohika. There was some whispering and conversation with the interpreter, who turned back to the interviewer to say, "Some of the teachers are confused. They heard that in America you cannot have religion in the classroom. How do you explain that the teachers pray for the students." "Praise," then, was such an unfamiliar practice, it had been translated as "prays." At Yohika, the expectations of the teacher, not praise, seem to be a primary determinate of school climate.

Appendix

Job Descriptions of the Principal in Illinois and Niigata

CHAPTER 105

SCHOOLS

5 10-21.4a. Principals—Duties

§ 10-21.4a. Principals—Duties. To employ principals who hold valid supervisory or administrative certificates who shall supervise the operation of attendance centers as the board shall determine necessary. In an attendance center having fewer than 4 teachers, a head teacher who does not qualify as a principal may be assigned in the place of a principal.

The principal shall assume administrative responsibilities and instructional leadership, under the supervision of the superintendent, and in accordance with reasonable rules and regulations of the board, for the planning, operation and evaluation of the educational program of the attendance area to which he or she is assigned.

School boards shall specify in their formal job description for principals that his or her primary responsibility is in the improvement of instruction. A majority of the time spent by a principal shall be spent on curriculum and staff development through both formal and informal activities, establishing clear lines of communication regarding school goals, accomplishments, practices and policies with parents and teachers.

School boards shall ensure that their principals are evaluated on their instructional leadership ability and their ability to maintain a positive education and learning climate.

It shall also be the responsibility of the principal to utilize resources of proper law enforcement agencies when the safety and welfare of students and teachers are threatened by illegal use of drugs and alcohol.

The principal shall submit recommendations to the superintendent concerning the appointment, retention, promotion and assignment of all personnel assigned to the attendance center.

If a principal is absent due to extended illness or leave of absence, an assistant principal may be assigned as acting principal for a period not to exceed 60 school days.

(Laws 1961, p. 31, § 10-21.4a, added by P.A. 76-652, § 1, eff. Aug. 6, 1969. Amended by P.A. 81-1067, § 1, eff. Sept. 26, 1979; P.A. 81-1237, § 1, eff. June 5, 1980; P.A. 81-1508, Art. I, § 47, eff. Jan. 4, 1981; P.A. 84-126, Art. IV, § 2, eff. Aug. 1, 1985.)

Formerly Ill.Rev.Stat.1991, ch. 122, ¶ 10-21.4a.

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[3] 校長の職務

学校教育法第28条第3項　校長は、校務をつかさどり、所属職員を監督する。

（校長の校務掌理権）

「校務」とは、学校の運営に必要な校舎等の物的施設・教員等の人的要素及び教育の実施の三つの事項につき、その目的を完遂するために要求される諸務の総称を指す。

（昭和32．8．20　参事官補佐）

校長はこの規定のほか、学校法の他の規定、施行令、施行規則、学校保健法などの法令により特別の権限をうけられている。

教育管理	授業終了の時刻の決定 臨時休業の決定と報告 〃	学校法施規 16 〃 18
教科目の管理	教科目の決定に関する意見の申出 教科の決定 労働時間の短縮 天災等の事由による特例 休暇時間・休日 〃（授業日の時間外・休日・学校予の短縮） 〃	地教行法 36，39 教特法 20 労基法 32 〃 33 〃 34，35 〃 61，62
児童・生徒の管理	児童・生徒の懲戒 〃 児童・生徒の出席状況の明確化 出席簿の作成 学籍簿の作成 高等学校入学者選抜 指導要録の作成と送付 高等学校長学力検査など 高等学校長学力検査などと入学者の選抜 休学，退学の許可 高等学校の学習指導（の基準）	学校法 11 学校法施規 13 学校法施令 19 学校法施規 12の4 〃 28 〃 53 〃 12の3 〃 54の3 〃 61 〃 62 〃 63の2

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学校の種類の決定	幼稚園教育要領 幼稚園設置基準 幼稚園の設置廃止 公立幼稚園の設置	学校教育法 6 〃 13 学校教育法施行規則 6 私立学校法 4(3)
施設の設置基準	学校施設利用の一般的基準 幼児数学級数の決定その他の編制 学級	社会教育法 44条2 消防法 8

(2) 学校法一学校教育法。学校教育法一学校教育法施行。学校法施行一学校教育法施行規則。教育法一教育公務員特例法。公務員一一般公務員法。

(1) 「校務をつかさどる」の意義

現代の学校は組織として扱われ、学校としての機能に組み込まれた教育を行う機能であって、単に個々の教師と生徒の間の教育活動の場だけを意味してはいない。学校は管理者（校長）の管理（学校教育法37条4項）のもとにあるとともに、法令、設置の基準をもって組織的に教育を実施する経営体であり、日本的な学校との教育について、広く考えて主体である。

一般に「校務」は、このような意味における学校の運営にとって、必要な一切の仕事と考えられている。これに対し、「校務」を「教諭は、児童の教育をつかさどる」（学校教育法28条4項）の規定との関連で、単なる教育にはとどまらない、すなわち校務から教育を除外するとする解釈がある。しかし学校は教育を目的とした機関であるから、教育から区別された校務を想定することは本来困難であり、校務と教育をあえて区別の概念と考えることは望ましくない。このように校務を管理職、人事管理に限定せずにむしろ広義的な教育活動と密接なかかわりをもっており、教育と切離して考えることはできないから教育活動の運営管理をふくむものとするのが一般的である。

校務の具体的内容としては、(1) 学校教育の内容に関する事項、(2) 教職員の人事管理に関する事項、(3) 児童生徒に関する事項、(4) 学校の施設・設備の管理に関する事項、(5) その他学校の運営に関する事項、が挙げられる。

「校長は、校務をつかさどる」といっても、校長一人で校務のすべてを処理することは不可能である。その場合の法律は、校長の責任において校務を処理していくということであり、学校運営の機能の維持のためにいろいろな校務を分担させなければならない。

(2) 「所属職員を監督する」の意義

所属職員とは、児童・生徒や校務を助ける職員すべてである。校務をつかさど

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